RECREATION/OPEN SPACE USES IN AGRICULTURAL AREAS

REGIONAL NIAGARA PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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Report to: Mr. Bell, Chairman, and Members of the Planning and Development Committee

Mr. Campbell, Chairman, and Members of Niagara Regional Council

Councillors:

Recreation/Open Space Uses in Agricultural Areas

The purpose of this report is to summarize the findings of the "Recreation/Open Space" study and to make recommendations regarding possible changes to the Regional Policy Plan.

Recreation Open Space Uses in Agricultural Areas

Purpose and Methodology

Over the past several years, there has been a modest but continuing number of proposals to develop recreation/open space uses in agricultural areas outside the Region's urban areas boundaries. Typically, these proposals have come from private entrepreneurs, private clubs, community organizations and local municipalities. It is assumed that the reason for a group or individual selecting a non-urban location for a recreation facility relates to one of two major reasons. Space with the desired qualities including central location, size, physical appearance is not available elsewhere or else the land while physically suitable is not available at a price the group or individual is willing or able to pay.

A study was carried out to assess the impact of recreation/open space uses in agricultural areas in order to provide some input into the consideration of possible changes to the Regional Policy Plan.

The Study adopted the following methodology:

1. Existing policies in the Regional Policy Plan were examined and analyzed.

2. The recreational policies of several other selected Regional municipalities and the policies contained in the Province's Foodland Guidelines were reviewed.

3. The literature relating to the topic of non-farm development in agricultural areas was examined.

4. Existing recreational uses located outside the urban areas boundaries were inventoried and mapped. The types of recreational uses surveyed included golf courses, public and private campgrounds, conservation areas, playing fields, picnic areas, race tracks, horse riding schools, and a variety of private clubs including ethnic and other community centres, yacht and gun clubs and church parks.

5. Finally, three recreational facilities were selected as case studies. They were a golf course, a conservation area and a private campground. Each of the facilities was surveyed to determine the degree to which it impacted on the surrounding farming areas. The survey involved a site inspection and a telephone questionnaire directed at the recreation facility operator and adjacent surrounding farmers.

Summary of Study Findings

The study was not intended as a comprehensive analysis of the topic of recreational uses in agricultural areas. For example, no attempt was made to examine in a scientific manner the supply and demand for recreational uses. Furthermore, the survey method, tended to identify only the more obvious impacts of recreation/open space uses in agricultural areas. Some of the longer term economic and social implications were only touched on. Despite these limitations, it is possible to identify a number of general conclusions.

1. The Regional Policy Plan does not permit private recreation facilities in the unique and good general agricultural areas. However, Policy 6.A.13 in the Plan can be interpreted to permit "public" recreation uses in the agricultural areas provided the uses can not reasonably be located elsewhere and provided any effects on surrounding farm land are minimized.

2. The Regional Policy Plan allows recreation uses in poorer agricultural lands, environmental areas, hamlets and in urban areas. Hamlets, and areas shown as Environmental and Rural in the Policy Plan involve a reasonable proportion of the total land base outside the urban areas boundaries. However, the distribution of these areas among the various municipalities is uneven with some municipalities, because of the quality of their agricultural land, virtually unable to locate recreational uses outside their urban areas.

3. With regard to the Official Plans of other Regional Municipalities surveyed, Hamilton-Wentworth and Halton restrict recreational uses on the best agricultural land. Peel has a policy identical to the Foodland Guidelines. Haldimand-Norfolk permits compatible recreation uses and Waterloo has no policy which specifically restricts recreation uses from their agricultural areas.

4. The Provincial Foodland Guidelines make some provision for certain types of "compatible" recreation/open space uses in agricultural areas provided buildings or other construction on the land are not involved, the land is left in large parcels and soil and topography are not altered adversely in such a way as to preclude the land being used for food production in the future. Based on a general knowledge of Niagara and a telephone survey of other municipalities, the study was unable to document an example of a recreation use being returned to food production. By contrast, there was evidence that, once established, recreation facilities have a tendency to further expand and intensify their operation and in some cases, to attract further non-farm development to the area.

5. The Region appears to be reasonably well supplied with recreation/open space uses of all types. Many of the facilities surveyed appear to serve not only a local and Regional market but cater as well to the tourist industry. Any analysis of need must take this relationship into consideration.

6. Recreation/open space uses appear to display the same range of adverse impacts on adjacent agricultural operations as other types of non-farm development. In some cases, the impact can be even more severe. The degree of impact is related to such factors as:

   - the size and intensity of activity carried out by the recreation use;

   - the type of recreation facility;

   - the nature of the particular type of farming activity in the surrounding area. Fruit growing areas and livestock operations appear to be the most susceptible to impacts from nearby recreation uses;

   - the degree to which the recreation facility is buffered or separated from adjacent agricultural uses;

7. Recreation/open space uses, often because of their relatively greater size compared to most other typical non-farm uses pose potentially greater problems with regard to removal of agricultural land from production.

8. The pressure to locate both private and public recreation facilities in agricultural areas will likely continue in the future in response to the relatively cheaper land costs available compared to urban areas and the availability of alternative supplies of suitable land located elsewhere.

Recreation Facilities Operated by Community Groups

There are a number of community groups such as ethnic organizations, service clubs, churches, the boy scouts and other non-profit associations which in the past have operated recreational facilities. The special problems of a restrictive recreation policy posed for these groups deserve some discussion. For the most part, these community groups provide an important and valuable service to their members and to the community in general. Normally, the groups operate with limited budgets and resources. It is therefore, not unusual that when they consider the development of a park or other recreational facility, they are drawn to the relatively cheaper lands outside of an urban area. Unfortunately, and despite perhaps their best intentions, the potential for conflict with the farm community can arise. While it is not difficult to sympathize with the constraints operating on these groups, it is important to also recognize that the benefits and cost savings of permitting their recreation facilities in agricultural areas may be more than offset by additional costs incurred by the surrounding farm community. Therefore, while there are some arguments for making a special exception for non-profit community groups in the Regional Policy Plan, it should also be recognized that this change may incur costs for farmers and losses to the overall supply of good agricultural land.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the "Recreation/Open Space Study" and on the comments received from the Federations of Agriculture there would appear to be little or no justification or support from the farm organizations for an amendment to the Regional Policy Plan to permit private recreational uses in the Region's unique and good general agricultural areas.

The review of the policies contained in the Regional Policy Plan indicated that public recreation facilities appear to be already permitted in the agricultural areas provided they can not reasonably be located elsewhere and provided any potential adverse impacts on nearby farming operations are minimized. There is some justification for not changing this exception for public recreation uses. Public parks are normally developed in response to public need and provide a valuable and necessary community service. It can also be argued that a public facility will be less likely to expand or unduely intensify its operation once established. Staff have considered the need to further clarify and expand Policy 6.A.13 in the Regional Policy Plan and to set out in more detail, additional locational and design guidelines for public parks. However, it is concluded that the general provisions of Policy 6.A.13 are satisfactory and that local official plans and zoning by-laws are perhaps better suited to this level of detail.

Recommendations

1. That this report and the Recreation/Open Space Study be accepted for circulation to the Clerks of the local municipalities, the Niagara North and Niagara South Federations of Agriculture and the Agricultural Sub-Committee for their information and comment.

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RECREATION/OPEN SPACE USES IN AGRICULTURAL AREAS

Regional Niagara
Planning and Development
Department

August, 1982.

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Acknowledgements

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Recreation/Open Space Uses in Agricultural Areas

Introduction

There has been a modest but continuing number of requests over the years by businessmen, private clubs, community organizations and municipalities to develop recreation facilities in agricultural areas, outside the Region's urban areas boundaries. These requests have raised some questions regarding the adequacy of the existing Regional Policy Plan policies related to recreational uses in agricultural areas. This study was undertaken to critically examine in some depth, the issue of recreational/open space uses in agricultural areas in order to determine what, if any, changes might be necessary to existing Regional policies on the matter.

This study focuses on the following two specific objectives.

1. The study attempts to document and evalute whether or not, and if so, to what degree, recreational uses display the same sorts of impacts as other types of non-farm development in agricultural areas.

2. The Study examines the existing distribution pattern and overall supply of recreational facilities in Niagara's agricultural areas. A detailed analysis of the adequacy of the existing supply of and possible future demand for recreational uses was considered beyond the scope of this Study.

Methodology and Contents

In order to meet the objectives defined above the following methodology was adopted.

- an interpretation of the existing policies contained in the Regional Policy Plan with respect to recreational uses.

- a survey of recreational policies of several selected Regional Municipalities and a review of the relevant portions of the Province's Foodland Guidelines

- a literature search of the topic and a general overview of the impact of other types of non-farm development in agricultural areas.

- an inventory and mapping of existing recreational uses located outside the urban areas boundaries. The types of recreational uses surveyed include golf courses, public and private campgrounds, conservation areas, playing fields, picnic areas, race tracks, horse riding academies and a variety of private clubs including

ethnic and other community centres, yacht and gun clubs and church parks.

- a survey and documentation of the impacts of recreational uses involving 3 case studies - a golf course, a conservation area and a private campground. The survey involved a site inspection and a telephone questionnaire directed at the recreation facility operator and adjacent farmers.

- comments of the Niagara North and Niagara South Federations of Agriculture are included as Appendix 2

Existing Regional Policy Plan Policies

The Agricultural and Rural Areas policies contained in the Regional Policy Plan were approved by the Ontario Municipal Board in February, 1981. Policies 6.A.1 and 6.A.2 in the Policy Plan provide for the overall direction and intent of the entire section of the Plan that follows. These policies state that good tender fruit, good grape and good general agricultural lands shall be preserved for agricultural uses. Considered by themselves, these two policies have the effect of precluding any recreation/open space uses from locating in agricultural areas. However, many of the subsequent policies in the Agricultural and Rural Areas section of the Plan are intended as exceptions or, perhaps more correctly, detailed interpretations of the more general 6.A.1 and 6.A.2 policies. Policy 6.A.6, for example states that compatible uses such as forestry and conservation of plant and wildlife are permitted in both unique and good general agricultural areas. The intent of this policy was to permit forest protection areas and conservation areas as managed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. It was recognized that these uses can be compatible with agriculture and can represent some direct and indirect benefits to agriculture by encouraging for example, soil conservation and improved drainage.

Policy 6.A.13 allows for public uses in agricultural areas provided they can not reasonably be located elsewhere and provided they are located to minimize any effects on surrounding unique and good general agricultural land, viable farm operations and natural farm drainage. The intent of Policy 6.A.13 was not to open, indiscriminantly, agricultural lands to public uses but rather to recognize that in instances where a public need existed and other suitable sites could not reasonably be expected to meet that need, then public uses could be permitted in agricultural areas provided any impact on agriculture was minimized. While recreation/open space uses are not specifically identified in Policy 6.A.13 it is assumed that this policy could permit public recreation and open space uses subject to the conditions identified above.

In summary, the Regional Policy Plan intends that recreation/open space uses should be permitted in the Rural Areas, the

Environmental Areas, Hamlets and Urban Areas. However, while the Regional Policy Plan prohibits private recreation/open space uses in the best agricultural land it does make some limited provision for public recreation uses subject to some important predonditions. It is also noted that the "Rural Area" shown on the Agricultural Land Base Map in the Policy Plan is imprecisely drawn and there is some potential for local municipalities to more accurately define and to possibly expand the Rural Areas.

Policies in Other Municipalities

The Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk, Halton, Hamilton-Wentworth, Peel, Waterloo and Huron County were contacted by telephone and asked whether they had Official Plan policies dealing specifically with recreational development in goof agricultural areas. Hamilton-Wentworth and Halton indicated that recreational uses were not permitted in their good agricultural areas. Haldimand-Norfolk's Plan indicates that "compatible" open space uses may be permitted in their good agricultural lands. Peel has a policy similar to the Foodland Guidelines described in the next section. Waterloo has no policy which specifically precludes recreational uses from agricultural areas. It was indicated however that the pressure to develop recreational facilities outside the urban areas was not a serious problem.

Huron County, a predominantly rural area, does not allow recreational uses except golf courses in agricultural areas. The rationale they use is that a golf course can easily be put back into farm land should it cease to operate. Other types of recreational uses are only permitted through an Official Plan Amendment.

The Planning Director of Huron County indicated that the amendment process gives sufficient control for careful examination of new proposals. However, he also noted that golf courses often request that they be upgraded to a recreational designation. Should a golf course be given the requested change, a possibility exists for a change in use to something more intensive and, therefore, possible conflicts with the surrounding farms.

The Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth was the only Region contacted with a policy specifically excluding recreational development from agricultural areas. Basically it states that the Region will discourage the use of agricultural lands for recreational development and that new proposals will be encouraged to locate on on soils of poorer quality where the impacts on the surrounding farm area will be minimized.

The Provincial Foodland Guidelines

With regard to recreation uses, the Guidelines state that:

4A.5 A compatible use in an agricultural designation includes land uses in support of agriculture, as well as uses which, while not related to agriculture, can continue adjacent to agriculture, without conflict and permit the land to be used for food production in the future.

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4A.7 A non-related compatible use leaves the land in large parcels suitable for commercial farming, does not require buildings or other construction on the lands, and does not alter the soil or topography adversely. It includes such activities as forestry, open space, conservation areas, outdoor parks, environmental areas and existing woodlots.

The Foodland Guidelines suggest that certain types of recreation/open space uses may be permitted in agricultural areas provided they are compatible and can, if required, be returned to food production in the future. The Guidelines suggest that compatible uses are low intensity activity areas on large parcels and do not require buildings or alter adversely the soil or topography.

The apparent importance that the guidelines place on the potential of a recreation/open space use being returned to food production is worth some further examination. Based on general knowledge of the Niagara Region and on the results of a telephone survey of other municipalities, it was not possible to provide any examples of a recreation use being returned to agricultural production. By contrast, there was evidence that once a recreational use was established, particularly a private recreational facility there was continuing pressure to intensify and expand the facility. There was also some empirical evidence to support the contention that recreational uses, once established, encourage some pressure for other non-farm related uses to locate in the area.

While in theory it may be possible to return some recreational uses to food production, the evidence would indicate othersie. This particular criteria suggested in the Foodland Guidelines for considering recreation/open space uses in agricultural areas, should be more critically examined and accepted only with caution particularly where privately-owned recreational land is involved.

Non-Farm Development in Agricultural Areas - A Summary of the Literature

Over the years, there has been a growing awareness of the effects of non-farm development on agricultural activities. As a result rural planning has become a major concern in many areas. Central to the issue of rural planning is the type, amount, and location of development that should take place in rural areas and the impact of that development on the continuing economic use of the rural resources.

A farmer cannot afford the luxury of being flexible in terms of his locational requirements. In order to operate optimally, farming requires the most productive soils available and large spaces free from disruptive factors. The supply of land, however, is fixed and as a result many uses are forced to compete directly for the same land. When non-farm development is allowed to take place on agricultural land a potential is created to produce a number of adverse direct and indirect effects.

The most obvious direct effect is the removal of farm land from production. While the size of the converted parcel may vary,

and perhaps in isolation, no conflicts are apparent, the cumulative effect of many non-farm developments is the depletion of the agricultural land base.

Further direct impacts involve the incompatibilities that are created between a non-farm development and a farm operation. In many cases farmers receive complaints regarding smells especially when associated with a livestock operation. Complaints also may be the result of dust from field cultivation and agricultural fertilizers or sprays. On the other hand farmers may be directly affected in their operation by such problems as trespassing, pilferage and vandalism. As a nuisance factor, these problems are usually accompanied by increased management costs for the farmer.

Another problem associated with these impacts relates to the restrictions that may be placed on a farm operation. There have been cases where farmers have been forced to alter their agricultural practices as a result of various complaints or where plans to build a barn or similar structure have been restricted as the Minimum Distance Separation formula or other land-use controls are applied. In some cases these complaints have led to restrictions in the farmers agricultural operation, and his ability to make a living may be adversely affected.

Non-farm development may also place increased pressure on municipalities to provide expensive urban-type services. The installation of these services (often not required or desired by the farm population) can result in higher taxes for the farm community. Water and sewer services, fire and police protection, snow and garbage removal and improvement of rural roads are some of the services likely to be demanded by non-farm development in agricultural areas.

The indirect impacts of non-farm development are not as easy to demonstrate since they tend to be cummulative in affect and materialize gradually over time. Traditionally, these indirect problems have received less attention from policy makers but the literature seems to suggest that over the long term, the indirect impacts may have a much greater consequence for the agricultural community.

One indirect impact of non-farm development involves the creation of what has been termed "urban shadow" and is created when urban development intrudes into an agricultural area creating expectations of further development. These expectations can affect land values and together with the more direct impacts mentioned earlier have the potential to create an uncertain farming environment in the immediate area. As one writer describes it,

> "The high purchase price for land will inhibit the entry of new farmers. It will inhibit the purchase of land to enlarge current farms. It will accelerate the exit of farmers who are less efficient, or older, or less emotionally committed to farming. The high price and resultant uncertainty will inhibit investment in modernization by farm operators, gradually

eroding competitive efficiency and productivity over the wide areas".[1]

Once the precedent for development on agricultural land has been established in an area, it becomes increasingly difficult to discourage further development and to halt the continued erosion of the agricultural land base.

There has been a great deal written on the subject of non-farm development in agricultural areas, but very little of it deals specifically with recreational-type uses. Most of the articles concentrate on the conflicts created by non-farm residential development. In the remaining sections of this study, one of the objectives will be to determine whether or not recreational uses create the same sort of conflicts as discussed above.

Existing Supply of Recreational Land

The next phase of this Study involves a mapping exercise and a listing of all public and private recreational uses outside the urban area boundaries (see Map 1). The numbers on the map correspond with those of Appendix 1, a chart listing all of the recreation/open space facilities by name and location. Map 2, "Agricultural Land Base" is included to permit comparison between the location of existing recreational uses and the various classes of agricultural land.

The sources of information for this inventory were the Niagara Region Existing Land Use Map of 1971, literature from the Region Niagara Tourist Council, recreation facility inventories prepared for Parks Canada and the Ministry of Industry and Tourism and assistance from the local municipalities. While every attempt was made to find all of the recreational areas, it is possible that the list is incomplete. The following is a list of conclusions derived from the survey of existing recreation/open space uses located outside the urban areas based the figures contained in Table 1.

1. There are 138 recreation/open space uses identified in Niagara outside the urban areas boundaries. Of these, 99(72%) were located in good agricultural areas and 39(28%) are located on either Environmental or Rural areas.

2. In every category of recreation the majority of establishments are located in the good agricultural areas.

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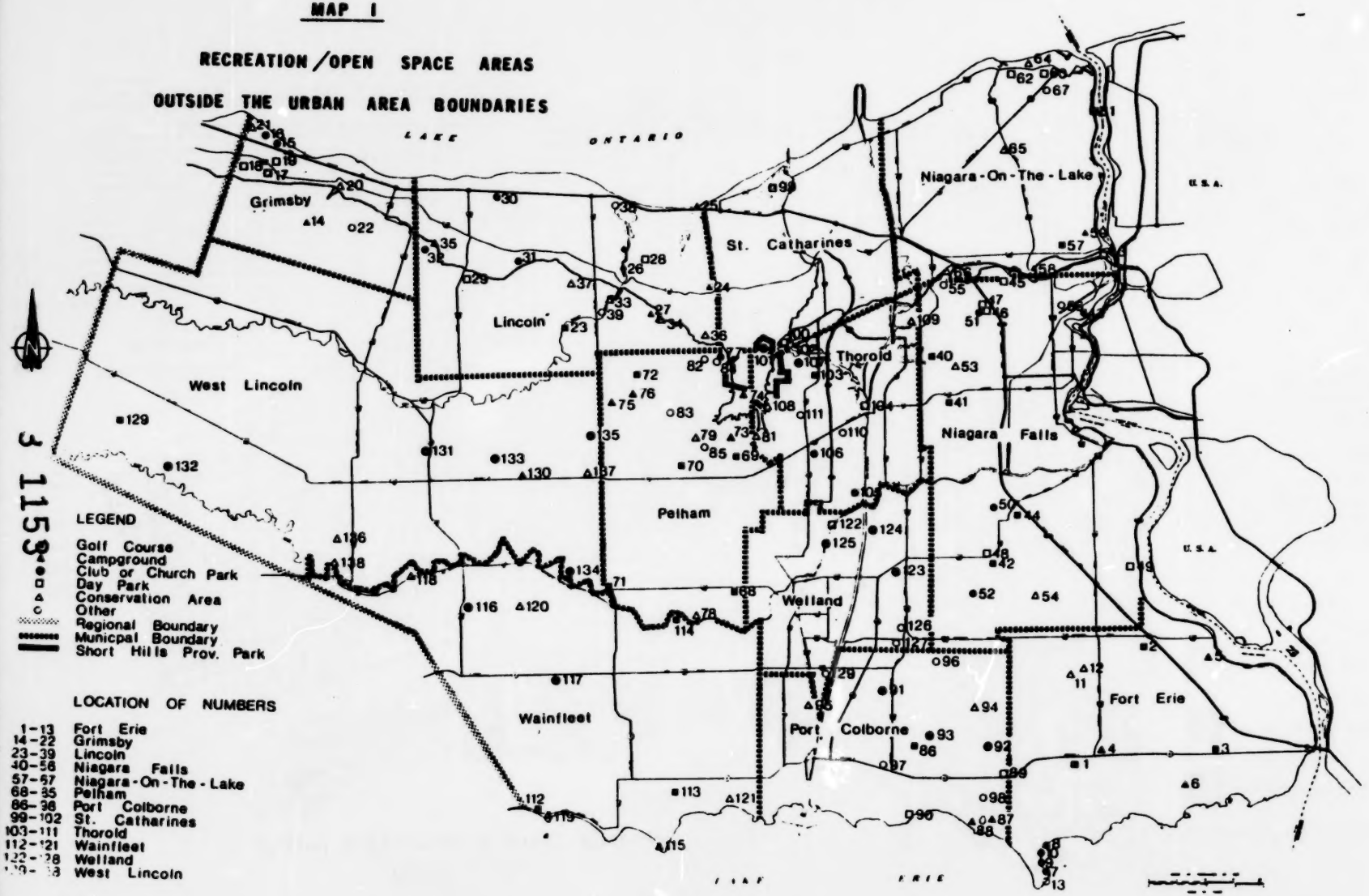
1. R. S. Rodd, The Crisis of Agricultural Land in the Ontario Countryside. Plan Canada, Volume 16, No. 3-4, September-December, 1976, p. 167.


MAP I
RECREATION / OPEN SPACE AREAS
OUTSIDE THE URBAN AREA BOUNDARIES
LAKE ONTARIO
Grimsby
Lincoln
West Lincoln
St. Catharines
Thorold
Niagara-On-The-Lake
Niagara Falls
Pelham
Welland
Wainfleet
Port Colborne
Fort Erie
U.S.A.
LEGEND
Golf Course
Campground
Club or Church Park
Day Park
Conservation Area
Other
Regional Boundary
Municipal Boundary
Short Hills Prov. Park
LOCATION OF NUMBERS
1-13 Fort Erie
14-22 Grimsby
23-39 Lincoln
40-56 Niagara Falls
57-67 Niagara-On-The-Lake
68-85 Pelham
86-98 Port Colborne
99-102 St. Catharines
103-111 Thorold
112-121 Wainfleet
122-128 Welland
129-133 West Lincoln

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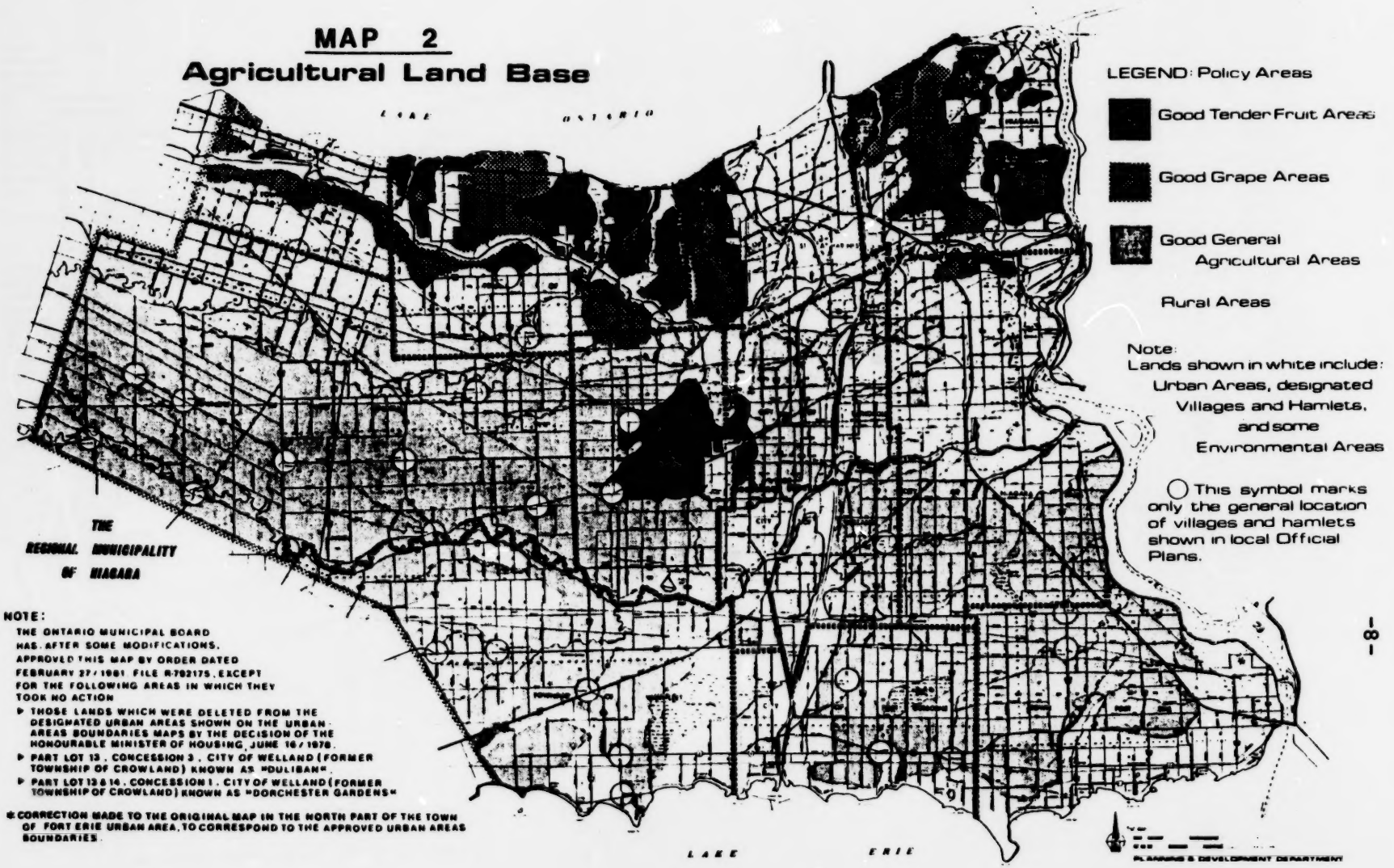
MAP 2

Agricultural Land Base


LAKE ONTARIO
LAKE ERIE
THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
LEGEND: Policy Areas
Good Tender Fruit Areas
Good Grape Areas
Good General Agricultural Areas
Rural Areas
Note:
Lands shown in white include: Urban Areas, designated Villages and Hamlets, and some Environmental Areas
This symbol marks only the general location of villages and hamlets shown in local Official Plans.
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

NOTE:

THE ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD HAS, AFTER SOME MODIFICATIONS, APPROVED THIS MAP BY ORDER DATED FEBRUARY 27/1981 FILE R-782175, EXCEPT FOR THE FOLLOWING AREAS IN WHICH THEY TOOK NO ACTION

- THOSE LANDS WHICH WERE DELETED FROM THE DESIGNATED URBAN AREAS SHOWN ON THE URBAN AREAS BOUNDARIES MAPS BY THE DECISION OF THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF HOUSING, JUNE 16/1978.
- PART LOT 13, CONCESSION 3, CITY OF WELLAND (FORMER TOWNSHIP OF CROWLAND) KNOWN AS "DULIBAN".
- PART LOT 13 & 14, CONCESSION 1, CITY OF WELLAND (FORMER TOWNSHIP OF CROWLAND) KNOWN AS "DORCHESTER GARDENS"

* CORRECTION MADE TO THE ORIGINAL MAP IN THE NORTH PART OF THE TOWN OF FORT ERIE URBAN AREA, TO CORRESPOND TO THE APPROVED URBAN AREAS BOUNDARIES.

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TABLE 1

INVENTORY OF EXISTING RECREATION/OPEN SPACE USES OUTSIDE THE URBAN AREAS BOUNDARIES

Local Municipality	Recreational Use							Location				
	Golf Golf Course	Public or Private Campground	Day Park	Private Club or Church Park	Conser-vation Area	Other	TOTAL	Good General Agri-cultural	Good Tender Fruit	Good Grape	Environmental	Rural
Fort Erie	3	3	-	4	2	1	13	6	-	-	-	7
Grimsby	-	1	3	2	2	1	9	3	-	4	1	1
Lincoln	1	4	2	3	4	2	16	3	1	5	7	-
Niagara Falls	5	-	5	3	2	2	17	13	1	2	-	1
Niagara-on-the-Lake	1	2	4	-	3	1	11	6	3	-	2	-
Pelham	5	4	-	1	2	4	16	10	5	-	1	-
Port Colborne	1	2	2	3	2	3	13	8	-	-	-	5
St. Catharines	-	-	2	1	1	1	5	-	-	-	5	-
Thorold	1	-	1	3	4	2	11	8	-	-	3	-
Wainfleet	3	1	-	2	4	-	10	7	-	-	-	3
Welland	-	-	1	3	-	3	7	4	-	-	2	1
West Lincoln	1	1	-	5	3	-	10	10	-	-	-	-
	21	18	20	30	29	20	138	78	10	11	21	18

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3. A total of 31 golf courses were identified in the Niagara Region; 21 are located outside the urban area boundaries and all of those are located on good agricultural land.

4. There are roughly 40 campgrounds in the Niagara Region with about half located outside the urban areas boundaries and fairly evenly split between rural/environmental and good agricultural locations. The majority of campgrounds outside the urban area boundaries (16), are private. The remaining two are managed by the Niagara Parks Commission. Not recorded in the data are three of the Conservation areas; Balls Falls, Chippawa Creek, and Long Beach, which also offer overnight camping.

5. Areas such as baseball parks, playgrounds and picnic areas were classed as Day Parks and are generally maintained by municipal governments, service clubs or the Niagara Parks Commission. Most of these are located in agricultural areas.

6. In total, private clubs and church parks represent the largest category of recreation/open space areas (30) primarily because of the broad definition assigned to this group. Included were ethnic organizations, church parks, boating or yacht clubs, scout camps, gun clubs and recreation or community centres.

7. There are 29 conservation areas, 22 of which are managed by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. They tend to offer recreational opportunities ranging from picnicing to hiking to overnight camping. The remainder are accounted for by the Short Hills Provincial Park. Short Hills Nature Preserve, the Regional Woodlot, Fifty Point Park, the Thorold Legion Conservation Club, and two outdoor education centres.

8. The remaining uses placed in the "Other" category include horse-riding academies, go-kart tracks, speedway parks, drive-in theatres, golf driving ranges, etc. A total of 20 of these uses were identified outside the urban areas boundaries.

Case Studies

In order to get some feel for the degree of compatibility that exists between recreation and agriculture, three recreation

facilities were selected for further study. The recreation areas selected include:

i) a private campground, located on tender fruit soils,

ii) a conservation area, which offers in addition to a wildlife sactuary, group and family camping, boating, fishing and other active recreational pursuits (located on good general agricultural soils),

iii) an 18 hole golf course also built on good general agricultural soils.

The reason for selecting these three recreational facilities was based primarily on their location in an active agricultural area. Also, an effort was made to find different types of recreational activity, both public and private, that were located in different types of farming areas.

The owners or operators of these recreational areas, as well as the farmers with abutting lands, were given a short questionnaire (Appendix 3) by telephone so that some idea could be obtained of the problems, if any, that exist between recreation and agriculture. In general the response rate was quite good with nine out of thirteen farm operators responding. The findings of these case studies are summarized below.

a) A Private Campground in a Tender Fruit Area

Site Description

This large private campground is almost entirely surrounded by active fruit farms. It is set well back from the main access highway. Neither the actual campground nor its physical structures can be seen from the highway. However, the campground abuts directly onto an orchard and other fruit growing areas.

Questionnaire Response

With the exception of the occasional request to turn off the bird bangers or to stop spraying when these activities continued late into the evening, the owner of the campground could not recall having received or lodged any complaints, and generally felt his operation was compatible with the adjacent farm operations. In addition he stated that he warns the campers upon arrival of a $1,000 trespassing fine and enforces an 11:00 p.m. noise curfew.

The adjacent farmers, when contacted reported as follows. One farmer in particular recalled complaints made by the campground owner regarding annoying smells from a nearby canning operation which has since ceased to operate. The operator has also complained regarding parked cars along a nearby road attracted by a "pick-your-own-fruit" operation. A farmer recalled other camp/farmer conflicts but these were considered isolated cases. A

farmer claimed that pilferage and trespassing were on-going problems incurring annual losses with no compensation. He did not believe a good neighbourly relationship existed. A few years ago, the campground owner rejected the idea of sharing in the cost of installing a higher fence which the farmer felt would mitigate some of these nuisance costs.

Another neighbour has taken his land out of active production altogether, partly because of the current economic situation, but also because of the "significant" losses incurred from fruit theft. He does not see his land returning to active production in the near future. In addition to trespassing campers, he noted snowmobiles or minibikes as a problem, but also felt there has been a decline in this activity in recent years which he attributed to the creation of Short Hills Provincial Park.

b) Conservation Area

Site Description

This large public conservation area is used for camping and boating. However a large portion has been left in its natural wooded state as a wildlife sanctuary and hiking area. The campground is bounded on the north by a river. With the exception of the river the campground does not appear to be well buffered or screened from adjacent roads and nearby farms. A dairy operation is located on the west side of the park with a residential dwelling on the east side. Across the river, there is a combination of farms and non-farm residences. The park is in an area shown as good general agricultural land.

Questionnaire Response

The park superintendent could not recall having lodged or received any complaints, a fact which he attributes to the distance separating the campground from its nearest neighbour. In general, it was found that a good relationship exists between the adjacent farmers and the recreational use. However, one adjacent farmer did experience fence-line damage such that the grazing location for the cattle eventually had to be changed. There have also been other isolated conflicts from time to time but all of the farmers contacted generally saw the conservation area as a good neighbour.

c) Private Golf Course

Site Description

This private golf course has operated on a large site in an area of good general agricultural land. The surrounding farm land appeared to be mostly planted in field crops. There was also evidence of encroaching residential development especially along the paved portion of the road leading up to the club house.

Of all the golf courses inspected this one has the least amount

of tree screening with only low wire fences enclosing the area. The golf season runs approximately from April 1 to October 30 with weekends being the busiest. The golf course originally opened with nine holes available for play and some years later another nine completed the course. It is interesting to note that one of the roads that runs by the course is paved until it reaches the outer boundary. It may suggest that the road was paved as a result of the golf course development.

Questionnaire Response

The only complaint the golf course pro ever remembers receiving was the result of a golfer who climbed a fence to retrieve a golf ball. Since that time the golf course has put up "no trespassing" signs and the pro feels that the members, at least, respect the signs, and know better than to trespass.

With regard to golfer's complaints, it is interesting to note that there is a nearby pig operation but the pro believes that golfers accept the smells as a factor of the course's rural location. Similarly, the farmer stated that he had not received any complaints about the smells but just a few "comments".

None of the surrounding farmers viewed the golf course as a problem and one in particular felt it was his best neighbour. He welcomed the golf course when it was built because it removed a number of unsightly, unkept farms, and another welcomed the golf course because their road was paved as a result. While most farmers object to the golfers climbing their fences, several stated that misdirected golf balls are often gathered and resold. One of the farmers, who insisted the golf course was a good neighbour, stopped raising cattle and eventually got out of farming because he had lost a substantial number of calves as a result of their eating the golf balls.

General Observations

1. Based on a site inspection of a number of recreation areas outside the urban areas, there did not appear to be many examples of obvious conflicts with surrounding farm land. For example, most campgrounds were in a fairly secluded location and generally surrounded by a woodlot. Most facilities appeared to be neat and well kept.

2. Highways, railway tracks and rivers can act as barriers between recreational uses and adjacent farms. Other conflict-mitigating techniques primarily involve some sort of tree screen or wood lot.

3. The degree of compatibility appears to be directly related to the type of recreational use and the type of agricultural land it is located on. It is believed

that recreational uses in the fruit growing areas produce the most severe conflicts followed closely by those near livestock operations.

4. Based on the three case studies, the tendency for recreational uses to attract other recreational uses was not evident. However, in nearly every case, non-farm residences were located close to the recreational areas although residential development in the agricultural areas is a common phenomenon in Niagara.

5. There were no examples found in Niagara where recreational uses have reverted back to agricultural production. Conversion while theoretically possible does not seem likely in most cases in view of the physical improvements made to the land by recreational development, such as alterations in soil composition, compaction, topography and drainage. It is also considered economically improbable in view of the amount of money spent on these land improvements and without any dramatic change in the economic conditions of farming.

6. There seems to be a general reluctance by people to make complaints to their neighbour. In the case studies, a number of farmers mentioned isolated problems with recreational users but stated that no complaints were lodged. This may be an example of a good neighbourly relationship, or a feeling of futility in terms of obtaining satisfactory solution.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this Study was to gather background information to assist in the formulation of a possible Policy Plan Amendment regarding recreation/open space uses in agricultural areas. This Study through an examination of the literature, a survey of policies in other municipalities and three case studies looked at the extent to which recreation/open space uses displayed the same sorts of impacts in agricultural areas as other types of non-farm development. This Study was not intended as a comprehensive analysis of the topic. For example, no attempt was made to examine in a scientific manner the supply and demand for recreational uses in agricultural areas. Furthermore, the survey method tended to identify only the more obvious impacts of recreation/open space uses in agricultural areas. Some of the long term economic and social impacts of recreational uses were only dealt with superficially.

From this study, it is possible to identify the following conclusions.

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1. The Regional Policy Plan is somewhat ambiguous in its provisions regarding recreation uses in agricultural areas. While it appears clear that private recreation facilities are not permitted in unique and good general agricultural areas, some qualified provision is made for public recreation facilities subject to certain conditions. The Regional Policy Plan does allow recreation uses in poorer agricultural lands, environmental areas, hamlets and urban areas. Some of the Official Plans of other Regional Municipalities also prohibit recreational uses in their best agricultural areas. Haldimand-Norfolk's Plan indicates that "compatible" open space/recreation uses may be permitted in good agricultural areas. Waterloo's Plan does not prohibit recreational uses in the agricultural areas and Peel has a policy similar to the Foodland Guidelines.

2. The areas identified as Rural, Environmental Areas, and Hamlets in the Regional Policy Plan are reasonably generous in size and do allow for recreation/open space uses. However, the distribution of these areas among the various municipalities is uneven with some municipalities, because of the quality of their agricultural land, virtually unable to locate recreational uses outside of their urban area boundaries.

3. The Region appears to be reasonably well supplied with recreation/open space uses of all types.

4. Recreation/open space uses appear to display the same range of adverse impacts on adjacent agricultural operations as other types of non-farm development. In some cases, the impact can be even more severe. The degree of impact is related to such factors as:

   - the size and intensity of activity of the recreational facility,
   - the type of recreation facility,
   - the type of agricultural activity in the surrounding area. Fruit growing areas and livestock operations appear to be the most susceptible to impacts from nearby recreational uses,
   - the degree to which the recreational facility is buffered or separated from adjacent agricultural uses.

5. Recreation/open space uses because of their relatively greater size compared to most other typical non-farm uses, pose potentially greater problems with regard to the removal of agricultural land from production. There is also no evidence to suggest that recreation open space uses can easily be reverted back to farming. For r private recreation facilities in particular, there appears to be a tendency to expand and intensify the use once established.

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6. The pressure to locate both private and public recreational facilities in good agricultural areas will continue in the future in response to among other factors, the availability of suitable lands located elsewhere and the relatively cheaper land costs available outside of urban areas. Some concern, however, is expressed that the cost savings in land prices for the recreation facility operator may, in many instances, be more than offset by the additional operating and nuisance costs incurred by the surrounding farm community. The costs represented by the loss of good agricultural land from the overall land base supply together with any possible long term social and economic implications should also be considered.

7. Based on the findings of this Study there appears to be little or no justification for an amendment to the Regional Policy Plan. Public recreational uses appear to be already permitted subject to certain conditions. In view of the fact that public recreational uses are normally developed in response to public need and are perhaps less likely to expand or intensify once established, no change to this existing exception policy in the Regional Policy Plan appears necessary.

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RECREATION/OPEN SPACE AREAS AND THEIR LOCATION

Local Municipality / Recreational Use / Name of Establishment	Location: Good General Agricultural	Good Tender Fruit	Good Grape	Environmental	Rural	Total Uses
FORT ERIE	6	-	-	-	7	13
Golf Course						
1. Cherry Hill	x					
2. International of Niagara	x					
3. Sunset 18 Hole Exec	x					
Campground						
4. Knight's Hide Away Park	x				x	
5. Miller's Creek Campground					x	
6. Windmill Point Campground						
Club or Church Park						
7. Bertie Boating Club					x	
8. Buffalo Canoe Club					x	
9. Buffalo Yacht Club					x	
10. Point Abino Yacht Club						
Conservation Area						
11. Stevensville C.A.	x					
12. United Empire Loyalist C.A.	x					
Other						
13. Braggs Boat Livery					x	
Niagara Parkway Belt						
GRIMSBY	3	-	4	1	1	9
Campground						
14. Melanson's Recreation Ltd.	x					
Club or Church Park						
15. Croation Club			x			
16. St. Vladamere's Park	x					

APPENDIX 1

RECREATION/OPEN SPAC AREAS AND THEIR LOCATION

Local Municipality Recreational Use Name of Establishment	Location Good General Agricultural	Good Tender Fruit	Good Grape	Environmental	Rural	Total Uses
GRIMSBY (Continued)						
Day Park						
17. Cline Road Park			x			
18. Leaward Park			x			
19. Oak Road Ball Park	x					
Conservation Area						
20. Beamer Memorial C.A.				x		
21. Fifty Point Park			x			
Other						
22. Golf Driving Range					x	
	3	1	5	8	-	17
LINCOLN						
Golf Course						
23. Twenty Valley	x					
Campground						
24. Big Valley Campground				x		
25. Charles Daley Park				x		
26. Jordan Valley Campground			x			
27. Shangri La Campground			x			
Day Park						
28. Jordan Lion's Park		x				
29. Kinsmen Park	x					
Club or Church Park						
30. Bled Park			x			
31. Cave Springs Camp			x	x		

Local Municipality Recreational Use Name of Establishment	Location Good General Agricultural	Good Tender Fruit	Good Grape	Environmental	Rural	Total Uses
Conservation Area						
33. Balls Falls C.A.				x		
34. Louth C.A.				x		
Lincoln (continued)						
36. Rockway C.A.				x		
37. Sugar Bush			x			
Other						
38. Campbell's Boats Ltd.				x		
39. Hunter Hill Farms	x					
Also some municipally owned lands above the escarpment near Beamsville						
NIAGARA FALLS						
Golf Course						
40. Beechwood	x					
41. Greenwood	x					
42. Rolling Meadows	x					
43. Whirlpool	x					
44. Willo-Dell	x					
Day Parks						
45. Fireman's Park		x				
46. Niagara Sports Park			x			
47. Regency Sports Park			x			
48. Schnider Road Park	x					
49. Sherk Road Park	x					
Club or Church Park						
50. Club Hungarian (proposed)	x					
51. Club Italia (proposed)	x					
52. Crowland Sporting Club	x					
Conservation Area						
53. Shriner's Creek C.A.	x					
54. Willoughby Marsh C.A.	x					
Other						
55. Niagara Riding Stables	x					
Niagara Parkway Belt						

APPENDIX 1

RECREATION/OPEN SPACE AREAS AND THEIR LOCATION

Local Municipality / Recreational Use / Name of Establishment	Location: Good General Agricultural	Good Tender Fruit	Good Grape	Environmental	Rural	Total Uses
Niagara Falls (continued)						
56. Whirlpool Driving Range						
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE	6	3	-	2	-	11
Golf Course						
57. Queenston		x				
Campground						
58. Log Cabin Campground	x					
59. Shalamar Lake Campground		x				
Day Park						
60. Butler's Burial Ground	x					
61. McFarland Point Park	x					
62. Newark Park	x					
63. Queenston Heights Park				x		
Conservation Area						
64. Niagara Shores C.A.(proposed)	x					
65. Virgil C.A.		x				
66. Woodend C.A.				x		
Other						
67. Mr. Wippy Mini Putt Niagara Parkway Belt	x					
PELHAM	10	5	-	3	-	18
Golf Course						
68. Highland	x					
69. Lookout Point		x				
70. Peninsula Lakes		x				

72. Sawmill x

RECREATION/OPEN SPACE AREAS AND THEIR LOCATION

Local Municipality / Recreational Use / Name of Establishment	Location: Good General Agricultural	Good Tender Fruit	Good Grape	Environmental	Rural	Total Uses
Pelham (continued)						
Campground						
73. Bissell's Hide Away		x				
74. Effingham Valley Park				x		
75. Indian Lake Campground	x					
76. Sun Valley Gardens	x					
Club or Church Park						
77. Lipa Park	x					
Conservation Area						
78. E.C. Brown C.A.	x					
79. Short Hills Nature Reserve		x				
80. Short Hills Provincial Park				x		
81. St. John's C.A.				x		
Other						
82. Elk Antler Farm	x					
83. Four Season's Farm	x					
84. Henderson Stables	x					
85. Hilton Smith Trout Ponds		x				
PORT COLBORNE	8	-	-	-	5	13
Golf Course						
86. Country Lane	x					
Campground						
87. Trailer Park					x	
88. Sherkston Beach					x	
Day Park						
89. Highway #3 Municipal Park	x					
90. Humberstone Centennial Park					x	

APPENDIX 1

RECREATION/OPEN SPACE AREAS AND THEIR LOCATION

Local Municipality Recreational Use Name of Establishment	Location Good General Agricultural	Good Tender Fruit	Good Grape	Environmental	Rural	Total Uses
Port Colborne (continued)						
Club or Church Park						
91. Club Rhinegold	x					
92. Niagara Antique Power Assoc.	x					
93. Niagara Wasp R.F.G. (Rugby Field)	x					
Conservation Area						
94. Humberstone Marsh C.A.	x				x	
95. Mud Lake Wildlife C.A.						
Other						
96. Brookfield Riding Stables	x					
97. Humberstone International Speedway	x				x	
98. Go Kart Track						
	-	-	-	6	-	6
ST. CATHARINES						
Day Park						
99. Henley Island				x		
100. Mountain Mills Park				x		
Club or Church Park						
101. Wetaskiwin Scout Camp				x		
Conservation Area						
36. Rockway C.A.				x		
80. Short Hills Provincial Park				x		
Other						
102. Mountain Mills Museum				x		
	8	-	-	3	-	11
THOROLD						
Golf Course						
	x					

Day Park		
104. Allanburg Sports Park	x	

RECREATION/OPEN SPACE AREAS AND THEIR LOCATION

Local Municipality	Location					
Recreational Use Name of Establishment	Good General Agricultural	Good Tender Fruit	Good Grape	Environmental	Rural	Total Uses
Thorold (continued)						
Club or Church Park						
105. Club Castropignano	x					
106. Regional Niagara Police Park	x					
107. Police Revolver Club	x					
Conservation Area						
80. Short Hills Provincial Park				x		
81. St. John's C.A.				x		
108. St. John's Outdoor Studies				x		
109. Thorold Legion Cons Club	x					
Other						
110. Can-View Theatres Ltd.	x					
111. Merrittville Speedway	x					
-passive recreation areas owned by Ontario Hydro, St. Lawrence Seaway Authority and the City of Thorold are available along the canal and in the Lake Gibson area.						
WAINFLEET	7	-	-	-	3	10
Golf Course						
112. Erie Breeze	x					
113. Port Colborne	x					
114. Westbrook	x					
Campground						
115. Morgan's Point Campground					x	
Club or Church Park						
116. Schwoob Rec. Hall	x					
117. W.A. Ellsworth Rec.Hall	x					

APPENDIX 1

RECREATION/OPEN SPACE AREAS AND THEIR LOCATION

Local Municipality Recreational Use Name of Establishment	Location Good General Agricultural	Good Tender Fruit	Good Grape	Environmental	Rural	Total Uses
Wainfleet (continued)						
Conservation Area						
118. Chippawa Creek C.A.	x					
119. Long Beach C.A.	x					
120. Regional Woodlot					x	
121. Wainfleet Wetlands C.A.					x	
Other						
-abandoned Welland Feeder Canal being developed for recreation						
WELLAND	4	-	-	2	1	7
Day Park						
122. Merritt Island				x		
Club or Church Park						
123. Cooks Mills Community Centre	x					
124. Boys Scout Camp				x		
125. Girls Scout Camp	x					
Other						
126. Crowland Kartway	x					
127. Welland County Speedway	x					
128..Welland Drive-In Theatre					x	
WEST LINCOLN	11	-	-	-	-	11
Golf Course						
129. Caistor	x					
71. Riverview	x					
Campground						
130. Burrow Trailer Park	x					

RECREATION/OPEN SPACE AREAS AND THEIR LOCATION

Local Municipality Recreational Use Name of Establishment	Location Good General Agricultural	Good Tender Fruit	Good Grape	Environmental	Rural	Total Uses
West Lincoln (continued)						
Club or Church Park						
131. Holy Cross Parish Park	x					
132. Mohawk Gun Club	x					
133. Regional Sportsman Gun Club	x					
134. St. Catharines Campers Club	x					
135. Wildwings Club	x					
Conservation Area						
136. Creative Centre for Learning	x					
137. Gainsborough C.A.	x					
138. Port Davidson C.A.	x					

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Appendix 2

Comments of the Federations of Agriculture

The Niagara North and Niagara South Federations of Agriculture were asked to submit comments early in the study process. A copy of the Niagara North Federation of Agriculture comments are attached to this appendix. The comments of the Niagara South Federation of Agriculture were submitted orally at the June 29, 1982 meeting of the Agricultural Sub-Committee.

The Niagara North Federation of Agriculture indicated that they were strongly opposed to the recreational uses in agricultural areas and that these uses should be limited to urban areas, hamlets and environmental areas.

The Niagara South Federation of Agricultural indicated that they could not support recreational uses on Class 1, 2, 3 or 4 agricultural lands. The Federation also listed a number of actual examples of the sorts of problems that have been encountered by their members who were located near recreation uses. The problems identified included:

- destruction of 4 acres of grapes from herbicides sprayed by an adjacent golf course;
- destruction of crops and fences through vandalism and trespassing;
- noise from an adjacent race track;
- damage to machinery from bottles and cans from a nearby campground;
- complaints about smells from a chicken barn from a nearby golf course;
- golf balls through the windows of a chicken barn;
- plastic wrapping in the hay resulted in serious health problems to cows when ingested.
- harassment of farm animals.

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IAGARA NORTH FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

R. R. #1
Vineland Station, Ontario
LOR 2E0
May 27, 1982

Mr. Corwin Cambray, Manager
Policy Planning
Regional Niagara
150 Berryman Avenue
ST. CATHARINES, Ontario

Dear Mr. Cambray:

In reply to your letter concerning the proposed recreational use of land in agricultural areas, the Directors, at their recent meeting, asked that the following resolution be forwarded to you:

Moved by Harry Pelissero Sr. that the Niagara North Federation of Agriculture is strongly opposed to recreational use of land zoned for Agriculture; that recreational uses should be kept within the urban and hamlet areas, environmental areas as presently stated in the Regional Policy Plan. This resolution was seconded by John Wiens, and carried.

Sincerely

(Mrs)Helen Zimmerman
Secretary-Treasurer

c.c. Alan Veale

Appendix #3

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Briefly describe your operation/activity

   (re: size in acres, type of activity, years in operation, peak period of operation)

2. Over the year have you ever received any complaints about your operation from the adjacent (farmers/recreational use) or lodged a complaint to your neighbour about his operation.

   If yes - a) What was the nature of the complaint?

   b) How did he respond?

3. Are there any problems associated with operating

   i) beside a recreational use

   ii) in an agricultural area

Supplementary question for recreational uses:

Q. How, if at all, is this location vital to your business (i.e. Why did you choose to locate here?

Supplementary question for farmers.

Q. Have you had to alter your farm operation in any way as a result of the adjacent recreational area?

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POOR

QUALITY

ORIGINAL